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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7940
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INFO RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 8189
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RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 2073
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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR IO/PSC, G/TIP AND NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PREL KPRO MO

SUBJECT: EFFECTIVENESS OF UN EFFORTS TO COMBAT SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN UN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS: MINURSO

REF: A) 07 STATE 115894
B) STATE 02709

¶1. (U) This cable responds to a request for information on MINURSO's efforts to combat trafficking in persons (TIP) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) involving UN peacekeeping mission personnel in the Western Sahara and Moroccan peacekeepers in Cote d'Ivoire. This message was cleared with Embassy Rabat and represents coordinated Mission views.

¶2. (SBU) According to the Government of Morocco (GOM), TIP and SEA are not a problem with the MINURSO mission in the Western Sahara. In discussions with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Poloff was informed that MINURSO personnel have cooperated fully with the GOM in efforts to deal with illegal migrants and trafficked persons found in the Western Sahara. Furthermore, the GOM is satisfied with MINURSO's efforts to control SEA and TIP in the region.

¶3. (SBU) MINURSO Civil Affairs Officer, Claire Bamber, reported that in 2007 there was one case of misconduct involving a Pakistani peacekeeper and a local civilian. The case was reported and thoroughly investigated. MINURSO ordered the Pakistani officer be sent home as a result of the investigation. The incident has been fully reported to the UN and the Security Council.

¶4. (U) In July of 2007 Moroccan peacekeepers in Cote d'Ivoire were accused of sexual abuse involving underage girls. The GOM fully supported UN efforts to investigate the accusations. An inquiry team, consisting of UN investigators and Moroccan army officers, was unable to unearth any conclusive evidence of abuse. No formal charges have been filed.

¶5. (U) MINURSO's Head of Mission and Special Representative of the Secretary General for the Western Sahara, Julian Harston, strongly

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endorses the UN's zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual exploitation and abuse. To further enhance the mission's already strict policies, MINURSO welcomed, in February 2007, its first Conduct and Discipline Officer. The officer will further develop a mandatory training program regarding sexual abuse and exploitation.

¶6. (U) Mission was unable to locate any reports, other than the one listed about by MINURSO, of SEA or TIP- involving MINURSO personnel.

We believe that the general public perceives no problem of this nature with MINURSO.

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